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# After Trotsky What Next?

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## After Trotsky, What Next?

1. Time, is absolute, and of the absolute we can form no idea. For this reason we can form no idea of time itself. We can, however, form an idea of the duration of time by the events that take place. We form an idea of a day by the rotation of the earth on its axis; we form an idea of a year by the revolution which the earth makes around the sun; and so in all cases we measure the intervals of time by the events that take place. The more events take place within an interval of time the longer that interval appears to us. A day crowded with events appears to us longer than an uneventful week. We live now in a time in which more significant events take place within one day than took place in the past within one year, and therefore a day seems to us longer than in the past a year appeared. On August 20, 1940, Trotsky was murdered in a primitive and savage manner. Only 53 days passed since then; yet, because every one of these days was crowded with great historic events, the murder of Trotsky appears to us to be so far removed from the present as the Murder of Caesar. To speak now of the murder of Trotsky is like speaking of ancient history. Now, ancient history is still significant for us; but with relation to the events that take place now the events of ancient history appear no longer significant. 53 days ago, the murder of Trotsky was a very significant event; but now it appears no longer significant. Now, if the murder of Trotsky was an isolated event, at this time it would be of little significance to us, and it would not be worth as a subject for a lecture now. But the murder of Trotsky is only a phase of an event that has taken place for many years in the past, is still taking place, and will continue to take place for many years to come. Therefore, in speaking of the murder of Trotsky, I shall speak of an event that is of vital significance to us now.

2. Stalin murdered Trotsky. Thus Stalin, again and for a while, appeased his quenchless thirst for revenge; and thus, also, Stalin became supreme and absolute. No longer will Trotsky challenge Stalin's supremacy or rob him of absoluteness. Trotsky is dead, what is next? Long ago I answered this question. More than twenty years ago I stated, and since then I repeated the statement thousands of times, that all the Russian revolutionary leaders would be destroyed. In a lecture on the Russian Situation, which I delivered March 11, 1930 - ten years and seven months ago - I stated, among others, the following: Of all the Bolshevik leaders only Stalin was left, who is yet in power; but Stalin will not long remain in power. In the near future, Stalin will either be deposed, or he will be assassinated, or, if he is favored by Destiny, like Lenin he will die a natural death. When Stalin is removed from the historic stage, there will be a fierce struggle for power, which will give rise to a frightful civil war. Communists will fight against communists; socialists, anarchists and other revolutionaries will fight against communists; reactionaries will fight against revolutionaries; religious will fight against atheists; the peasants will fight against the proletariat; and the whole Russian people will fight against the present regime. The enemies of communism will find the much coveted opportunity to invade Russia. Priests, Rabbis, capitalists, socialists, anarchists, liberals and pacifists will join the armies and the navies of the capitalist countries in a holy war against Russia. Russia will become the world Armageddon. Blood will flow in rivers, millions of Russians will be killed, and Russia will be dismembered. A terrible reaction will set in, the international proletariat will be discouraged, and the revolutionary movement will be retired from history. Thus a great social experiment will come to an end, and a high social ideal will again fail.

3. The realization of this prophecy is the answer to the question what is next? Now, the murder of Trotsky and the other revolutionary leaders is not the real tragedy; first, because he who takes up the sword must be prepared to perish by the sword. A revolutionary, like a soldier on the battle-field, must be prepared to be killed. What is to be expected is not a tragedy. Next, when Trotsky and the other revolutionary leaders were in power, they acted like Stalin. Finally, if by chance



Trotsky came again to power, he would murder Stalin just as Stalin murdered him. The real tragedy is this: in murdering one another, the revolutionary leaders also murdered the Russian revolution. It was said that a revolution devours its children but what was overlooked was this: the children devour the revolution. The Russian revolution gave birth to the Lenins, the Trotskys and the Stalins; without the Russian revolution there would be neither Lenins, nor Trotskys nor Stalins. The children that the revolution brought out murdered the revolution. With the death of the Russian revolution also died the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the hope of mankind. And so, instead of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, we have the reactionary movement of the fascists; and, instead of hope, we have despair. A great historic achievement ended tragically, and a heroic chapter of history ended as a farce. What can we learn from the past, and what can we hope from the future? The Russian revolution failed, what revolution will succeed? The leaders of the Russian revolution betrayed, who can be trusted? Scepticism stalks about and destroys all faith, all trust and all hope. Scepticism begets indifference, and indifference is the mother of chaos and darkness. If we look to the past, we are discouraged; and, if we look to the future, we are frightened. We cannot go back to the past, we cannot remain where we are, and yet there is no incentive to work and struggle for the future. This is the situation that confronts us. The historic events, of which the murder of Trotsky is only a phase, presents itself in three aspects: a human aspect, a historic aspect and a moral aspect. I will consider these aspects in the order stated.

4. The Human Aspect. To most people, who have no idea of history, the tragedy appears to be the result of a struggle between human passions and ambitions. We are told that the Russian revolutionary leaders, like leaders generally, were jealous of one another, they were ambitious, each striving to become the supreme leader, and therefore they destroyed one another. Men that are motivated by passions and ambitions must be in one another's way, they must destroy one another, and they must destroy what they had achieved. This is a naive and superficial view of what is taking place in history. History is not made by men, nor is it determined by the passions and ambitions of leaders. History makes men, and uses the passions and ambitions to realize its purposes. History is not a succession of blind and unconscious events; history, is a rational, conscious and predetermined process of human existence which realizes the predetermined destiny of mankind. Just as the Lenins, the Trotskys and the Stalins did not make the Russian revolution, so the Lenins, Trotskys and the Stalins did not destroy the Russian revolution. It was history that made the Russian revolution, and it was history that destroyed it. To understand why history made and destroyed the Russian revolution, we must go to history itself. But, alas, history is still a book sealed with seventy-seven seals. Not only ordinary men, but even historians and philosophers have not yet learned to understand the book of history; even they do not understand what is taking place now and what will be the outcome of the present world struggle. And not only the historians and the philosophers, but even revolutionary Marxists do not understand history. This is shown by the fact, among others, that, like most ordinary men, they regard the tragedy of the Russian revolution as the result of the struggle between the passions and ambitions of the revolutionary leaders. How did the Stalinists and the Trotskyites regard their struggle against one another? They viewed it from a naive, a superficial and human viewpoint. The Stalinists regarded themselves as the true revolutionaries, the depositaries of true Marxism and Leninism, the true friends of the working class and Soviet Russia. Therefore, they believed that only they had a right to be in supreme power, and only they were competent to direct the policies of Soviet Russia. In turn, the Stalinists regarded the Trotskyites as reactionaries, traitors, fascists, enemies of the working class and Soviet Russia. Therefore the Stalinists believed that they had a right, and it was their duty to destroy the Trotskyites. On the other hand, the Trotskyites regarded themselves as the Stalinists regarded themselves, and the Trotskyites thought of the Stalinists as the Stalinists thought of the Trotskyites. Therefore the Trotskyites believed that only they had a right to be in supreme power, and that only they were competent



ent and trustworthy to direct the policies of Soviet Russia. Therefore the Trotskyites believed that they had a right, and it was their duty, to remove and to destroy the Stalinists. Thus we see that the Stalinists and the Trotskyites took of history the same naive and superstitious view that the most ordinary men take. This shows that the Stalinists and the Trotskyites never understood history, and they never understood Marxism. If they understood Marxism, they would know at least this: that men do not make history, and that history is not determined by the passions and ambitions of men. Marx made this clear: history is a process of human existence — that is independent of the will and the consciousness of men. Marx taught that, in considering a social transformation, we must disregard what men think of this transformation, what they think of themselves and of one another. Hence, to understand the tragedy of the Russian revolution we must disregard what the Stalinists and the Trotskyites thought of themselves and of one another; they were only the blind tools in the hands of history. History made the Russian revolution, history brought out the Lenins, the Trozkys and the Stalins to perform the works of the revolution. History destroyed them together with the revolution, and by all this history accomplished a historic purpose. But the Stalinists and the Trotskyites never understood the Russian revolution and what history was accomplishing by it. Worse still, they never understood Marxism, and they never were Marxists. They were all through deceived. Hence their destruction is no tragedy. And since history made the Russian revolution and history destroyed it, after it has performed its historic function, the destruction of the Russian revolution was not a tragedy. And, since there was no tragedy, there is nothing which we should regret, and there is nothing which we should fear. Therefore it is not for us to judge and condemn, it is for us to understand. What did history intend to accomplish by the Russian revolution? This brings us to the historic aspect of what appears to be the tragedy of the Russian revolution.

5. The Historic Aspect. The Russian revolutionaries, believing that men make history, believed that they could make the Russian revolution, and that they could determine the historic function and course of that revolution. The Russian revolutionaries studied the history of past revolutions, and yet never perceived that a revolution is made by history, and not by men; and that a revolution has a historic function and course that are independent of the will and the consciousness of men. Marx regarded the French revolution as the most perfect type of revolutions. Let us, therefore, examine the French revolution. The French revolutionaries believed that the function of the French revolution was to establish liberty, equality and fraternity. But, as a matter of history, the function of the French revolution was, as Marx said, to destroy Feudalism, and to clear the terrain for modern capitalism. And now let us consider the course of the French revolution. Prior to 1789 France was feudalistic and monarchic. A crisis precipitated the revolution. The first revolutionary wave brought to the fore the Constitutionalists. The second wave brought to the fore the Girondists, who guillotined the Constitutionalists. The third wave brought to the fore the Jacobins, who guillotined the Girondists. In 1793 the revolution reaches its highest crest. Great political and economic changes were inaugurated. Then the revolution began to subside, and the process was reversed. The Jacobins were overthrown and guillotined by the Girondists, then the Girondists were overthrown and guillotined by the Constitutionalists. Then the Constitutionalists were overthrown and destroyed by Napoleon. In 1815, Napoleon was overthrown, the Bourbons were restored, the monarchy was reestablished, reaction settled down, and the revolution came to an end. This was the history of all past revolutions, and this also was, is and will be the history of the Russian revolution. Let us see the perfect parallel between the French revolution and the Russian revolution.

6. The Russian revolutionaries believed that the historic function of the Russian revolution was to establish socialism. We shall presently see that the historic function of the Russian revolution was to destroy private capitalism and establish state capitalism. For the present, let us consider the course of the Russian revolution: it was exactly like the course of the French revolution. Prior to



the Russian revolution, Russia was feudalistic and moribund. A crisis precipitated the revolution. The first revolutionary wave brought to the fore the Lvovs and the Liliukofs - constitutionalists. The next wave brought to the fore the Kerenskys and the Mensheviks - the Girondists of the Russian revolution, who retired the Constitutionalists from the stage of history. The third wave brought to the fore the Lenins and the Totskys - the Jacobines of the Russian revolution, who retired the Girondists from the stage of history. Great political and economic changes were inaugurated. The Revolution reached its highest crest, and the revolution began to subside. At first, Lenin died; then one of the Bolshevik leaders after another was guillotined, until Stalin - the most reactionary of the Bolsheviks remained in power. But by the logic of events even Stalin will be retired from the stage of history, to make room for still more reactionary leaders. This will continue until the reaction will be complete. If the Russian revolutionaries had understood history, they would have spared themselves bitter disappointments. Then they would be content to play their historic roles, and would retire from the stage of history once they had performed their roles. But because they naively believed that they were indispensable to history, and that they could stay on the historic stage all the time, for this superstition they had to pay and did pay with their lives. Fata volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt. And now let us consider the broader side of the tragedy of the Russian revolution.

7. History is a process of the development of the human race. What determines the nature and course of the development of the human race? Marx answered: it is determined by the mode of production. According to Marx the mode of production has a nature, course of evolution and destiny of its own, which are independent of the will and the consciousness of men; but man himself has neither a nature or a consciousness of evolution nor a destiny of his own. The will, the consciousness, the course of evolution and the destiny of mankind are all determined by the nature, course of evolution and destiny of the mode of production. As the mode of production is at a given time, so also will be the consciousness, the thoughts and the beliefs of men, and so also will be the whole social superstructure. The destiny of the mode of production is to integrate all the means, the forces and the processes of production and to convert them into one universal system of production. Capitalism is only a link in the long chain of evolution of the mode of production. By the law of dialectics, capitalism will negate itself and make room for socialism. Upon the basis of socialism communism will rise. Thus communism is inevitable. Since the mode of production determines the will and consciousness of men, it follows that, once the mode of production brings out socialism, men will become socialists; and, when the mode of production brings out communism, men will become communists. Between the will and the consciousness of men and the mode of production there is a correspondence; but this correspondence is determined by the mode of production. According to this materialist conception of history, the mode of production is the seal and man is the wax; the impression on the wax corresponds with the seal. A change in the seal will result in a change in the impression on the wax. This being so, all that we have to do to solve the social problems is to change the mode of production, and human nature will change as a matter of course. For this reason the Russian revolutionaries took it for granted that with the inauguration of a socialist plan of production, even if that plan is inaugurated by force, the will and the consciousness of the Russian people will correspondingly change. For this reason, also, the Russian revolutionaries did not concern themselves about the nature and stage of evolution of the Russian people. At numerous occasions I showed that Marx perceived a truth about history that is of transcendent significance, but at this occasion I am concerned only about this: to show that this is a one-sided and inadequate idea of history; and, because the Russian revolutionaries never perceived this, they paid with their lives.

8. First, what basis did Marx have for the assumption that, while the mode of production has a nature, course of evolution and destiny of its own, which are independent of the will and consciousness of men, man is a perfect blank, and that



his nature, course of evolution and destiny are determined by the mode of production? This was a most unwarranted assumption, which has no basis in fact or in thought. The truth is this. Just as the mode of production has a nature, course of evolution and destiny that are independent of the will and the consciousness of men; so man has a nature, course of evolution and destiny of his own, which are independent of the mode of production. The correspondence between the will and the consciousness of man and the mode of production is determined, neither by the mode of production nor by men, but is determined by history itself. Secondly, Marx assumed that the correspondence is simultaneous. Marx tells us that man, by acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. This is true, but what is overlooked is this: the correspondence is not simultaneous, but successive. Consider the present world situation. The mode of production has already reached a state of perfection and integration that it is already capable of sustaining the whole human race in abundance, comfort and ease. Indeed, the present state of the mode of production is already capable of sustaining the state of socialism. Mankind already solved the problem of their material existence, and they are no longer under the cruel necessity to struggle with one another for the means of life. And yet, what is the situation? Mankind are now involved in a world struggle that brings upon them infinite misery and suffering, and which struggle will destroy the present society, its civilization and its institutions, and will decimate the human race. Why is this so? The answer is this. Between man and the mode of production there is a correspondence, but this correspondence is not simultaneous, it is successive. All progress begins at the periphery and moves towards the centre; and, when the centre is reached, all further progress is from the centre back to the periphery. To make progress, man must begin at the periphery, which is the external world. Man must begin to change and improve the external material world. By changing and improving the external material world, man also begins to change and to improve his own nature. But between the change and improvement of the external and material world and the change and improvement of human nature there may be an interval of thousands of years. The material world is already prepared for socialism, but it will take many centuries before human nature will be prepared for socialism. But the Russian revolutionaries believed that they could establish socialism in backward Russia right now. This was a fatal mistake, and for this they paid a terrible penalty. The Russian revolutionaries believed that the historic function of the Russian revolution was to establish socialism; we shall presently see that its historic function was to establish state capitalism, and this the Russian revolution accomplished. Let us briefly consider this matter.

9. The present social order rests on private capitalism, but private capitalism can no longer function, and therefore it will disappear in the near future. If at this time the working class were rational, class conscious, revolutionary and organized, they would come to the fore, they would take in hand the land, the means and the processes of production, they would use them in an organized and rational manner, and thus they would establish socialism. And we must bear in mind this: socialism can be established and will be established only by the working class: this is their historic function. But the working class is not yet prepared to perform this historic function. We have then this situation: private capitalism can no longer exist and socialism is yet impossible. What course, then, is open for history? Only this course: to call upon the state to perform the function which the working class should have performed. The state must now take in hand the land, the means, the processes and the forces of production and use them in an organized manner in accordance with a national plan. When, in addition to its political power, the state also acquires economic power, the state becomes supreme and absolute. The political form of the state becomes fascism. Thus state capitalism and fascism are inevitable. This is what has already been accomplished in Soviet Russia, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and this will also be accomplished in all other countries. In the past, I spoke of this, so often and at such great length that I do not have to elaborate on this now. The historic function of the Russian revolution was to ini-



state capitalism and fascism, and this the revolution accomplished. Therefore there was no tragedy. But the Lenins, the Trozskys and the Stalins believed that they were establishing socialism. We already saw what Marx taught us, namely, that, in considering a social transformation, we must disregard what men think of the transformation and what they think of themselves and of one another. The Lenins, the Trozskys and the Stalins never understood what history made them do; they were only blind tools in the hands of the revolution and history. So much for the historic aspect. And now we come to the moral aspect.

10. The Moral Aspect. Prior to the Stalin-Hitler Pact, the communists, the friends of Soviet Russia and the fellow-travellers accepted and justified everything that was done by the revolutionaries in Soviet Russia; they accepted and justified even the most heinous and sadistic crimes upon the ground that the aim justifies the means. The aim of the Russian revolution was noble, humane, just and ideal therefore, it justified the means used to realize this aim. But after Stalin and Hitler made the Pact, when Stalin and Hitler, Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, revealed themselves to be birds of a feather that flocked together, then many of the communists, friends of Soviet Russia and the fellow-travellers were bitterly disappointed and disillusioned. Then they completely reversed their attitude towards Soviet Russia, the Russian revolution, and the very principle upon the basis of which they previously justified all that was done in Soviet Russia. Whereas before they justified the most heinous and sadistic crimes committed by the revolutionaries in Soviet Russia upon the ground that the aim justifies the means; now they discovered that this is a pernicious principle, and they condemned even the good which the revolutionaries accomplished in Soviet Russia. Now they condemned, not only the Russian revolution, but all revolutions. Thus they raised a moral issue. Does the aim justify the means? Since this moral issue involves, not only the Russian revolution but all revolutions, past, present and future; we must meet this issue adequately. At the outset, I must state the following. By raising this moral issue, these disappointed and disillusioned individuals show that they have a most naive and superstitious notion about history, about revolutions and about the nature of man. They naively and superstitiously assume that men are free agents, who are free to choose the means and the aim, and they can make history as they please. Since men are free agents, who can choose the aim and the means, it follows that men should choose the right aim and use the right means to realize the aim. We shall presently see that they do not know what they are talking about.

11. Does the aim justify the means? This is one of the oldest, profoundest and most difficult problems that confronted thoughtful humanity. Profound thinkers bestowed on this problem infinite thought, and yet they thus far failed to solve the problem. It is the task before us to solve this problem. An aim implies means. Whatever be the aim, we must use appropriate means to realize that aim. Suppose I want a chair on which to sit. It is clear that I must use wood, a hammer, a saw, a plane, nails, paint, and the like, and I must use them in the proper manner. I cannot saw wood with a hammer, I cannot drive in nails with a saw, I cannot paint with a knife, and I cannot make a chair from water. Now, in ordinary cases it is easy to determine what means we must use to realize an aim. We may say generally that an aim justifies the use of such means by which we can realize the aim. But, when we come to complicated cases, especially cases which involve morality, humanity, justice, and the like, the problem becomes ever more difficult. Does the aim justify the means? It is clear that, if the aim itself is immoral, inhuman, unjust, and the like, whatever be the means used they are not justified by the aim, because the aim itself is unjustifiable. We are not here concerned about such aims; we are here concerned about right aims, aims that are moral, humane, just, and the like. It is also clear that such an aim will justify means of the same nature. Thus far there is yet no problem. In other words, if a noble, humane, just and ideal aim could be realized by means of the same nature, then the solution would be this: use moral, humane, just and ideal means to realize a moral, humane, just and ideal aim. But the difficulty arises from this. Whatever be the aim, and may it be ever so moral,



humane, just and ideal, it can be realized only by using means of a contrary nature. It is this which raises the question: Does the aim justify the means? Here, again, a still greater difficulty arises. If a moral, humane, just and ideal aim could be realized by means of a contrary nature, even then the aim would justify the means. But the difficulty arises from this: thus far no aim was realized. It is this that raised the problem: does the aim justify the means? Men of thought came to the conclusion that a moral, humane, just and ideal aim cannot be realized by means of a contrary nature. We can now realize why this problem remained unsolved. Indeed, it is a very difficult problem. Yet, we shall endeavor to solve it.

12. Let us begin with the Russian revolution. For centuries the Russian people were oppressed, exploited and degraded by tyrants, oppressors and exploiters. To free the Russian people from the tyrants, oppressors and exploiters was unquestionably a moral, humane, just and ideal aim. But how could this aim be realized? This aim could be realized only by a revolution. If a revolution is to be successful, the ground for it must first be prepared, and this can be prepared only by a revolutionary movement. Now, in Czarist Russia a revolutionary movement could be carried on only in an illegal and immoral manner. The revolutionaries had to lie, to deceive, to rob and even to kill. When the ground for the revolution was prepared, the revolution itself came. If the reactionaries within Russia and outside of Russia would permit the revolution to perform its historic function, then the revolution would have been peaceful, moral, humane and just. But the reactionaries were determined to destroy the revolutionaries and the revolution, and for this purpose they used immoral, inhuman, unjust and sadistic means. What were the revolutionaries to do? If they refrained from using similar means to fight for the revolution and the Russian people, the revolution would fail, and the Russian people would remain under the old tyrants, oppressors and exploiters. To acquiesce in this, the revolutionaries would have committed the greatest crime against the Russian people. Hence, the revolutionaries were right and justified in using any means to overcome the enemies of the revolution and the people. Thus, to realize a moral, humane, just and ideal aim, the revolutionaries were compelled to use means of a contrary nature. Did the aim justify the means? What was true of the Russian revolution was equally true of all revolutions; and what was true of revolutions was equally true of all human endeavors to realize a radical and noble aim. Now, if indeed the Russian revolution realized socialism - which was the aim of the revolutionaries - the aim would justify the means. But, as we already saw, the Russian revolution did not and could not realize socialism. This being so, did the aim of the revolutionaries justify the means they used to realize the aim?

13. In the face of these facts, naive and sentimental idealists came to the conclusion that a noble aim can justify only noble means. These idealists maintain that the reason why until now no aim was realized was because men used immoral, inhuman and unjust means to realize their aims. But since, as we saw, to realize a noble, moral, humane, just and ideal aim we must use means of a contrary nature, these idealists came to the conclusion: resist not evil. Refuse to resist evil, and evil will die of itself. This brings to the fore a new aspect of the problem. We shall not lose ourselves in abstraction nor drown in the infinite facts of past history; but we will test this principle in a very concrete way. These idealists have a task right before them. The nazis are determined to conquer the whole earth, and to reduce the rest of the human race to a state of slavery, to serve the superior nazi race. What will these idealists advise the rest of mankind to do, what will these idealists do themselves? Hic Rhodus, hic salta: Suppose these idealists and the rest of mankind do not resist the nazis, then the nazis will realize their aim: the rest of the human race will be enslaved, degraded and dehumanized. This means that the rest of mankind, their children, grandchildren, and all their descendants to the end of time will become and remain mere cattle used by the superior nazi race solely for their purposes, just as we use cattle now. Can we conceive a great, more heinous and more sadistic crime than the one which these idealists propose to commit and which they would advise the rest of mankind to commit? Bear this



in mind. It is a great crime to kill a man, but it is an infinitely greater crime to convert a man into a beast. And this is exactly what the nazi superior race proposes to do with the rest of mankind. It is told that Tolstoy, when he became infatuated with the doctrine of non-resistance, delivered a lecture on this subject. After the lecture, he was asked this question: suppose that on coming home he found his house surrounded by cannibals, who were about to take his wife and children, kill them, and make of their bodies a feast for themselves; what would he do? Tolstoy answered: he would not resist. This is absolute insanity. If one is determined to let cannibals kill his wife and children and not resist, he is absolutely insane. Reason dictates that self-preservation is the highest virtue, from which flow all other virtues. Self-preservation means also preservation of one's wife, children and fellowmen. Reason will dictate that, if one's wife and children are in danger, that he should sacrifice his own life to save his wife and his children. Reason will also dictate similar sacrifice for the sake of one's fellow men. Thus this apparent idealism that would permit cannibals to kill one's wife and children turns out to be the most insane and the most sadistic crime: it is an absolute and unmitigated selfishness and cowardice. Suppose we consider another case. Suppose a serpent attacks a man. The situation is such that either the serpent will kill the man, or the man should kill the serpent. What would these idealists advise the man to do, would they advise him not to resist evil? The serpent is a beast, while man is a rational and superior being. Reason will dictate that we should concern ourselves far more about a man than about a serpent. Does not this apply to the nazis? Are they not beasts? What distinguishes man from the beast? It is reason, humanity, justice, and the like. The nazis repudiated reason, they trample under foot humanity, morality, justice, and the like, and in the most brazen-faced manner extol brutality, cruelty, inhumanity and sadism; while the rest of mankind endeavor to hold on to reason, strive to become moral, humane, just and the like; are not the nazis serpents in comparison with the rest of mankind? Since the nazis are determined to destroy the rest of mankind, the latter have the right, and it is their duty, to destroy the nazis. But the nazis can be destroyed, not by non-resistance, but by the use of effective means. Does not the aim justify the means?

14. Let us look at the matter in its broadest aspect. Man started out as a beast, but he was predestined to rise above the beast and to become a rational and humane person. To accomplish this man had to transcend the beast that he was and remained. First, he had to rise above the beast and become a savage; then he had to rise above the savage and become a barbarian; then he had to rise above the barbarian and become a civilized person. And even this is not yet his goal; man will have to rise above the civilized and become a morally autonomous person, a superman. But in accomplishing all this, mankind had to destroy themselves as they were. Throughout the past, backward humanity struggled against all progress, against any change and improvement, and against their own destiny. What was to be done? The only course that was open was to use force: the savages had to destroy the beasts; the barbarians had to destroy the savages; the civilized had to destroy the barbarians; and the supermen will have to destroy the civilized. This will continue until mankind attain to their destiny, when they will all become rational and morally autonomous. Since this is the destiny of mankind, this is the highest, noblest and sublimest aim; and yet this aim could be realized only by the use of means of a contrary nature. Men are wiser in their conduct than they are in their philosophy; for while through their philosophy speaks only their immature mind, through their conduct speaks life itself. Throughout the past, in their conduct mankind acted rationally and as the eternal conditions of existence dictated; only in their philosophy they lost themselves in abstractions and irrationalities. There is yet a deeper aspect of the problem which we must consider.

15. Existence rests on the eternal and infinite law of equivalents. For whatever we get from existence we must pay an equivalent, and this equivalent we must pay in coins of work, struggle and suffering. We must work for the means of life, we must struggle for the attainment of knowledge and understanding, and we must



suffer for spiritual excellence. Between conduct and consequences there is an organic and indissoluble relationship; but between conduct and consequences the relationship is dialectical: conduct changes into consequences of an opposite nature. This arises from the very law of equivalents. We must have pain to have pleasure, we must sorrow to have joy, and we must suffer to have happiness; and we must use immoral, inhuman and unjust means to realize a moral, humane and just aim. It is not a question of the means, it is a question of the aim, because the aim justifies the means. Take the case of an individual criminal. Suppose that a criminal kills a man. Society cannot disregard this anti-social crime: in self-preservation society must protect itself against criminals. Now, a criminal does not commit murder in open day light, in the presence of people; he commits his crimes secretly, and he covers up his crime so that he should not be detected. How can society bring the criminal to justice? Only by detective work, but detective work means lying, deceiving, and the like. Suppose the criminal is apprehended, he is imprisoned, he is tried and condemned either to imprisonment or death; are not all these acts of society immoral, inhuman and unjust? And yet society must commit these acts, for it has no alternative. Now, there are sentimental idealists who hold society responsible for the crimes committed by individuals; but, in turn, it must be asked: is not the individual responsible for the crimes committed by society? What determines the character of the individual and the character of society? Some thinkers maintain that the character of the individual is determined by society, other thinkers maintain that the character of society is determined by the individuals composing society. It is clear that the individual cannot rise above society, but is it not equally clear that society cannot rise above the individuals? Who, then, determines their respective characters? Here we meet the same answer: neither society determines the character of the individual, nor the individuals determine the character of society; both are determined by history. Since both are determined by history, it follows: whatever be the causes that determine the individual to commit crimes, the same causes determine society to punish the criminal. What shall be done with tyrants, oppressors and exploiters? They are criminals and anti-social; they are a menace to society and to the members of society. Society and the members of society, in self-defense and self-preservation, must remove the tyrants, oppressors and exploiters; but this can be done only by acts that are immoral, inhuman and unjust. Thus we see that the aim justifies the means. But this brings to the fore the following question. Since the aim justifies the means, then all aims should have been realized; and yet we know that thus far no aim was realized, how can this be explained? This brings us to the difficulty that made it impossible to solve the problem before us, namely: does the aim justify the means? We shall presently see the solution.

16. In considering this question in its deepest aspect, we must clearly draw a distinction between the aim of history and the aims of men. When we do this, we at once perceive that history always realized its aim. This we already saw that history took in hand a beast, and in the course of time made of him in succession a savage, a barbarian, a civilized man, and now makes of him a superman. And history used for the purposes of realizing its aims means that were immoral, inhuman and unjust. Hence, concerning history we may say absolutely: the aim justifies the means. But, when we come to consider the aims of men, we perceive that men never realized their aims. And the question arises: why did not men realize their aims? The answer is, because their aims did not coincide with the aim of history, and this was so because thus far men did not understand history. Until now mankind were yet infants, and infants cannot have a correct and adequate idea of the life-task that is before them. Parents and teachers must lure the infants to their training for the serious and hard tasks of life with music, song and play. Little five year old Johnny is made to believe that, by learning to spell the words: cat, mat, and the like, he will become President of the United States. Since until now mankind were yet infants, history had to deceive them with illusions into their training for the serious and difficult tasks of life. And thus it came to pass that until now mankind were motivated by utopias and illusions. Two thousand years ago the back-



ward races were lured by the utopia that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Two thousand years later, the working masses were lured by the utopia that the kingdom of socialism was at hand. And so it was in all cases. Mankind never realized their aims. Judaism, Christianity, Communism, and all other great aims were not realized; yet history realized its aim: mankind passed from the state of beast and became more or less civilized. In due time history will also realize the sublime aim, which is the destiny of mankind; and then what turned out to be utopias and illusions will reveal themselves to be the intention of history: mankind will realize all their utopias and dreams. Little five-year old Johnny is made to believe that, by learning to spell the words cat, mat, and the like, he will become the President of the United States. This is a utopia and an illusion. Yet, wait a while, and little Johnny will become President of the United States, and he will become such just because he learned to spell the words cat, mat, and the like.

17. There is another aspect of the solution. Infants cannot adequately serve an aim. In addition to serving an aim, they must also serve some personal petty purposes. Since until now mankind were yet infants, they could not adequately serve any aim. While serving some aim, they also served some personal petty aims. In most cases, the aim was only an excuse and a mask to cover up some personal aim. In other words, while apparently serving a noble aim, they in fact served their passions, ambitions and personal interests. The men who served an aim regardless of personal interests, passions and ambitions, were very few. Now, we saw that an aim justifies the means used to serve the aim; but an aim cannot justify the means which are used to serve other purposes. For instance, take the Russian revolutionaries. We know that they were idealists of a high order; we know that they worked, struggled, suffered and even died for the sake of their noble aim. Yet this is not the whole story. When we look deeper into the matter, we find that most, if not all, revolutionaries were motivated by passions, jealousies, vanities, ambitions, and the like, all of which had nothing to do with the aim. We must bear this in mind. Work, struggle, suffering, death and martyrdom are not yet guarantees that the idealists served their aim adequately. There was never an aim - no matter how criminal, immoral or inhuman - for the sake of which men did not work, struggle, suffer and die. Take the nazis: are they not working, struggling, suffering and dying for the sake of their criminal aim? Hence we see this paradox: Jews, Christians, Communists, and other idealists, while ready to die for their ideal, will yet stoop to the lowest level of immorality to serve their own personal interests. For instance, in the struggle between the Russian revolutionaries, was it always a struggle motivated by the noble aim? Yes, we are all noble idealists, provided we are on the top; but, if others are on the top, we will disregard the idea. Hence in considering the question: does the aim justify the means, we must eliminate from consideration all acts and means used to serve, not the aim itself, but some personal passion, ambition and vanity. When we do this, we shall then see the following. First, to the extent that men truly and adequately served an aim, the aim was realized. Secondly, no aim thus far was fully realized, because thus far men did not serve any aim truly and adequately.

18. The conclusion is this. First, in all cases the aim must be noble, moral, humane, just and ideal. When such is the aim, it is no longer a question of the means, for this aim will justify the means necessary to realize the aim. Secondly, the means used must be necessary to realize the aim, and no more of the means shall be used as is actually necessary. Thirdly, in serving any aim, nothing else shall be served: all personal considerations, aims, ambitions and purposes must be absolutely and completely eliminated and disregarded. And for this purpose we need no outside guidance: each one knows fully and adequately whether he serves the



aim or he serves his own interests and purposes. No one can be deceived in this. Thirdly, we must always bear in mind that men are not free agents; they are not free to choose the aim, and they are not free to choose the means: all is determined by history. Mankind cannot rise above their historic evolution. So long as men are still infants, they will err and commit wrongs. Still even this is not to be charged against men. Since it is all determined by history, we cannot blame any one: before history all are equally guilty, and all are equally justified. Again, since it is all determined by history, and thus far history has achieved an infinite task, spite of the means that it used, there is nothing of the past which we are to regret, and there is nothing in the future which we are to fear. Finally, what took place in Soviet Russia was necessary and inevitable. The revolutionary leaders erred, they did not serve their ideal adequately, yet the Russian revolution was not a failure: it accomplished the purpose which history intended to accomplish by the revolution. Again, the revolutionary leaders were not betrayed by history. For everything we get from existence we must pay an equivalent. For the exceptional privilege which history conferred on the Lenins, the Trozkys and the Stalins, they had to pay an equivalent; and, since the privilege was exceptional, they had to pay an exceptional equivalent, and that equivalent was death. Thus we see that neither the death of the revolutionary leaders nor the death of the revolution itself was a tragedy. Death is a condition to life: without death there could be no life. Unless a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it dies, it bringeth forth an abundance of fruit. The death of the revolutionary leaders will bring forth revolutionary leaders a hundredfold, a thousandfold; and the death of the Russian revolution will bring forth many other revolutions. State capitalism and fascism are not a reaction; they are progress and revolution. What revolutionary work state capitalism and fascism will accomplish we shall see in the next lecture on the Universal Crisis and the United States.